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LAOLUS
AND OTHER POEMS

LAOLUS AND OTHER POEMS

BY

ERIC DICKINSON

*For in a thousand moods
I have traced out the many patterned ways
Of sweet disaster, dismal loveliness
That is now gone and never shall return
For me...*

CLIFFORD KITCHIN

ALIGARH

AT THE JAMIA PRESS

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NOTE

The author would like to express his obligation to the editors of *Coterie*, *The Palatine Review*, *Oxford Poetry*, *The Oxford and Cambridge Miscellany*, *The Oxford Chronicle*, *The Oxford Outlook*, and to Messrs B. H. Blackwell, for permission to reprint some of the poems in this volume.

PREFACE

The many difficulties that attend the production of a volume of verse in India will I think be generally appreciated. Book production as a higher art has yet scarcely passed a stage beyond initiation. For whatever merits the present volume can offer in outer attractiveness I have to thank the controllers of the Jamia Millia Press, since but for their enthusiastic assistance unreservedly placed at my disposal no achievement had been possible that might at all compete with the finished home product. Their help has made a pleasure of what might easily have been a most tedious undertaking, and can only leave me with the sincerest sense of obligation and thanks to all those Mohammadan friends of the Press, and pupils and colleagues of my University who have lent me their assistance in the preparation of this volume and with whom I have worked so long and so consistently in harmony.

ERIC DICKINSON

Aligarh,

February 1st 1924.

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ENVOY

TO A WOULD-BE MAKER OF RHYME

*If money you disclose
You'll know today's remembrance :
Not so the poet's semblance
Till he Death's way goes.*

*So if the page is blank
Just leave it I advise,
For me you'll surely thank
When you grow wise.*

*Just live out all your minutes,
And get the gold my lad :
And don't ape silly poets,
For that's all just a fad.*

*In remembrance for to-morrows
The pure and virgin page,
He'd scrawl with silly sorrows,
Or flame it with his rage.*

*So lad—since you must know it,
Forgotten in to-days,
Remembered in repose
By a few who knew his ways:
Thus awhile the poet—
And this way goes !*

**TO WILFRID CHILDE AND CLIFFORD
KITCHIN**

UNREASON AND UNREST

LAMENT FOR MOURNING

THE night is filled with those who gather near
To tell of unwrit deeds to tear the heart,
Or act to win a smile for Sorrow's fall
Here moves such comradeship as Hellas knew,
And honour as Leonidas might gain
O listening here it seems the stars do ring
From their beloved firmament their bells
So soft, that from their alabaster shrines
They cloak the world's hot wounds with soothing calm

These men's rough tongues are loud, but yet I hear
Far-off in some immortal forest's hush
The acorns from their giant thrones fall fast
Below the forest roof to cleave the ground,
And there embedded quickly raise new stems:
Thus swift within a night form worlds anew
For heaven's loftier flock to nestle in.
In such a way I dream the world shall rise
Again from her vermilion bed, regird
Afresh her progeny with fuller love
And strength than decks her present twisted growth.

Significant the signs, the wonders ripe
To lift us from distress and sorrow's rift.
O Beauty, take fair heart to raise your head—
We are not beaten down beneath the hurt
Of Archimago; he shall not live to rive
And bondage us in piteous dens of ill,
Because of Nights who with their ebon wands
Rebuke the Day her light's serenity.
Ah no, your limbs and buoyant laughing life
Were never made to perish, but to rule
All streams and woods, aye, all of laughing ways,
Eternal with the storm-breast of the sea-bird's home !

But yet my spirit fails, and ebbs my hope ;
So bruised, so bruised with trial, all broken low
These men with their quick eyes and tightened lips.
O stricken, stricken beauty, press your head
Within the crook of this my arm, and I
Will turn my eyes upon your tired face
To whisper brokenly how I'd bring love .
Within your bitter days to mend your ills.
The leopards who have crouched with flashing calm
Within the burnished past, now crouch with eyes
Sore blinded by the blood that drips from war
And dyes the liliated field to crimson death.
O Beauty hush, and build your broken strength ;
For you are Youth, sweet emperor of the world !

D. L. I. BARRACKS :

GRIMSBY, 1917.

THE SHIP

AND down the widening river of a giant despair
A gaunt and sombre barque came drifting past the
 wide sad fields of pain;
Too often she was made to pause as yet again
Her ragged sails compelled by some invisible and
 wanton hand
Flapped dully with a limp and almost hopeless air,
O'erwhelmed by some strange stagnant calm of
 bitterness from off the land:
Wondering that essence which assailed them there
 between two wide dank seas of sand.

Yet on she drove out to a black and wondrous deep;
And at her mast's head Hope's fair pennon swooned
 and soon seemed like to fall:
Yet bleak and strong grave Destin's flag flew over all.
The barque was girt with wide black bands and weird
 fantastic panoplies,
That oft were dipped beneath the darkling leap
Of waves; again to rise and show the wastes their
 dismal harmonies.
No soul was there who marked those deathly tones
 in all the wastes of dreary seas.

Down by the black mast's foot all bent and bowed
Sat one, like talked-of Ulysses, when Ithaca was
wasted low
Telling the gods had dealt him yet one further blow:
Knowing he'd meet in hideous ashes the once rare
beauty of his wife,
And so in meeting would find Hope all crushed and
limp and cowed :
So now to that bowed figure at the black mast's foot,
who'd done with strife,
And did but journey on towards the veil of everlasting
night—away from life.

A dun and sombre robe concealed the agued soul :
Shuddering like some vast abysmal fathom of the
ocean's tears ;
For it had battled back in that array of years,
And was weary and astrain for one soft pure and
lasting peace,
Yet wondered if it ere might chance to gain it whole.
The battlefield had been those wide sad fields of pain,
with no release
From those massed furious onslaughts of the merciless
foes who would not tire or cease.

Some there were among those fields of pain and stress
Who'd dealt him left and deadly stabs—so strange
 he'd never thought to meet,
While at night, the sweat upon his brow, he'd beat
His tired mind upon that strife which loaded and
 oppressed him there :
His heart so wrung with agonising bitterness
It seemed he scarce might rise again to tide the pitfall
 and the snare,
So all the universe seemed bleak for very want of pity,
 love, and care.

And he had seen men buffeted and cast awry,
Who balancing their wits upon a pinnacle of chance,
 or Hope ,
Within that garden of their selfmade dreams would
 grope,
And stagger, trying to shape and pacify those images
 that came—
Which wearing bright-hued robes, oft would imply,
A mincing gait, a coxcomb's air, a silly, proud, and
 empty fame
Of their own setting up, that journeys on, then falls,
 in one cascade of shame.

And they had come to him when shattered, worn,
and rent ;
Listening he had oped his scrip, and gave them freely
alms of ruth :
For by his own great sorrow he had learnt of truth,
And grief had served to render him more loving of his
fellow mate:
Such love indeed he had, that when he often spent
That love with haste upon some soul unwilling to
intagliate
It on his heart, he mourned, and sighed the loss—
that soul he'd found inanimate.

Yet as he journeyed on towards the halls of night,
The retrospect wellnigh complete—when shouldering
thro' the surging press
He spied that vision of his present mad distress.
"Ah, unkind shape, you dog me then to Death's own
sleeping-halls ;
Can then I never hide myself from out your sight ?
Can then I not forsake that ache you bring, which
only thought enthralls ?
Be still, I hear you though you whispered soft as
summer' neath the singing falls."

'Twas Love eternal, dear, the perfect whole,
For which his own great spirit craved; and as the
gates of night drew nigh
He shuddered at some fearsome shape, and sped a
cry :
Alone he travelled in that gaunt grim haunted barque—
alone, alone !
And so again his soul cried out, cried out for soul .
Yet silence followed only there that loud and bitter
desolate moan,
With none to hear in all that waste of dreary seas its
cracked and hollow tone.

But now a transient beam across the waters sped ;
Low on the western verge he marked the glowing
steeds in team :
Yet he was being borne from their bright golden gleam;
But yet had time to see what girded up his saddened
soul anew :
Another ship came plunging there on which the
lightening fed,
Her poop and prow all bathed in it, and through her
sails a fresh wind blew,
That moved her fast, as fast as that Orestes who be-
fore the Furies flew.

And as she came amain, he marked upon her deck
A bright Shape sat, between whose knees a golden
harp was set, to send
Unceasing melodies, a brave and wondrous blend
Or all the songs of love from cradlehood to eventide
of life.
And then the circlet of despair from off his neck
Was lifted clear : for now it almost seemed to him
that love with life,
And tympanum, and song, was come to cheer him
where alone the dark was rife.

The Shape at last arose and left the golden harp,
And with a slow and saddened air approached the
vessel's side, and gazed
Upon that *grim and sombre figure there so crazed.*
A tender wind played round the filmy garments of the
lovely shape,
To blow the veil aside, to give the Wanderer sharp
And piercing pangs of joy that left the windows of his
soul agape
And shivering in their frames at what they viewed, and
stole his heart in wondrous rape.

Upon his bowed black form in tender pity gazed
Those eyes—moist like some glistening hollow of a
new wave's lifting shower :
In gentle metre now came words of gentle power !
"O Wanderer, then, hast quite forgot how back in
those wide fields of pain
You caught and held a soul, and to your soul raised ?
And then, though for a time, you held it fast, it
seemed 't was all in vain ;
Amid the awfull press 't was wrenched from out your
grasp, and as you thought, was slain.

"But Wanderer, it was not slain, though nigh enough
to death,
. It was not slain, but lay awhile unconscious from
the wild stampede.
Then slowly, life, and breath grew in the trodden seed;
And when it waked, it saw you struggling in the van
against the dole
Of madness there, and you were nigh to your last breath.
And then it saw no more, the host closed in, it feared
the dismal toll ;
While bitterness and loneliness came with the van of
night to sear the soul.

And like a bell from some sweet home of lost content
That silvery speech across the intervening space was
 lifted clear,
And sank into the heart of the poor Wanderer's fear,
Whose soul was like a waste and thirsty place,
 ill nourished and ill fed.
It now revived, and used the life so newly sent
In lowly answering speech to that fair pitying shape
 he had deemed dead :
Yet now had come to stay him from those paths where
 loneliness and madness led.

"Enough ! As ash beside the fields of frozen snow
My love beside that love of yours, which I poor fool
 disdained and passed,
Unwitting of the desolation that should last.
Enough ! Enough ! Full well I know the love you
 would have given me,
Yet which I thought as homage due from one below
To one who walked in the chamber of those dreams of
 which the key
Was that false heart then conjured by the phantom
 of a woman such as thee".

Then suddenly that toneless barque on which he knelt
Sank swift from under him; an instant more and with
a firmer tread
He walked another deck; with patient soul he fed
His senses with the harmonies that round him played
unceasingly,
And with that lovely shape, whose eyes he more than felt
Glowed with the love of motherhood; so hand in hand
across that sea
Those souls sailed out to sleeping-halls where Death
binds all in lasting harmony.

BURIAL FOR THE LIVING.

I.

MADDALO rose and turned away from all
The table's rare associative dreams
And stood before the open window's light.
Dusk draws on and lilac perfume woos
His mind to dwell on all past lilac-time.

The quiet of a summer night descends,
And from the velvet-folds to hold Maddalo's
Gaze a mask from some old trading-booth.
Hangs white and famined with a hunger born
Where Dante found life's loveliness was slain.

As in a dark mysterious mirror, drawn
And pale, with eyes that serve to measure best
The starving of the soul, the mask reflects
A secret canker set within the heart :
Each in each two masks retain exact
The devious torments of the crazed in soul—
Maddalo's and his daemon's conjured there.

The noon had been most beautiful in pride,
As when a myriad love-wings work a charm
For binding of the guards of Sheba's queen.
The groves of old Versailles had whispered dreams
Of gambolling innocents and mating elves:
The lutes of Love's fair infancy were strung,
And in the sheen of heaven's floral day
The intimate consciousness of life was plain.
But then Maddalo heard, with ancient hearse,
How brooding Grief's poor retinue moved near.
Yet in between the steps, so low, he heard
Where mouth spoke unto mouth with exquisite
Too full caress in breath of beauty's home,
Where lime and verdured shadow mingled joy
For shepherd, shepherdess, or queen and king,
Unmindful of a slow deliberate cortege.

Low to earth Maddalo bent his head,
 For very turbulence of things intense,
 Whose thousand tongues articulation sought
 Yet might not find, and finding not, oppressed
 The advocate of fierce necessity.
 Then last, as stung by fiercer grief, more cruel,
 His voice up to the glazed cerulean
 He flung. "O God, why is it that you send
 No hands to calm this leap of bitterness
 Into a holiday immaculate with joy ?
 Of all the treasures you have heaped for me
 Did I not freely give as you direct
 In moulding for the lives of others ?
 I had not judged these gifts as worthless fruit,
 Or as the water in the quiet brook
 Whose purity is overlooked, nor sought
 By clamorous children paddling from the heat
 Grown ardent far beyond their own consent.
 Then why O calm Creator, warden high
 Of sempiternal sovereignty, O why
 Have you condemned the soul to wander desolate !
 I may not understand how cold desertion
 Falls upon the soul's anointed secrecy
 Within the chapel where the cruse was pure
 With Love's most herbally enchanted depths,
 And wine most crusted with rewards of life ;
 I cannot understand, nor remedy may find ! "
 You are the God who scatters all your songs
 Of Love through Earth's four-winded brazen gates :
 Is my one song too poor a thing to join thine
 And pass about the dwellings where you rule ?
 Can you not favour Love, since Satan grows
 To fury, throws my pride, and on my knees

Here casts me, broken, lonely, and obscure ?
Into silence, into bitterness
Of night about the cornerake's bosom, Love
Is stol'n, sick with that astrology
Of bitter vision and past ecstasy,
And yield of thirsty harvests sown in vain ! "

Maddalo then grew quiet ; in Heaven too
All sound grew still with past meridian sleep.
And yet again hushed interlude has ceased,
The chestnut aisles renew their communals,
Of many past delights in noon's disport,
Where squirrels play by pools of Antoinette.
But absent is one voice of all the voices
Made by God for worship and for truth,
One silver voice whose dear familiar tone
Had crowned most perfectly the groves
of old Versailles.

Mask looks on mask, their famined cheeks
Expressive of defeat and dull despair,
And lips compressed in one thin line of pain
To which compassionate pity comes not near.
Then from the lamp-lit street below at last,
Impregnating the warm moist-laden air
Mingled garlic and patchouli-smells
Rise to scatter annihilation's waste.

Maddalo moves to beat the tambourin !

Versailles, July 1920.

DOUBT

I HAVE declared my love,
And if you take it ill,
Ah well, then I am clove
In two, and beaten low,
Aye, to the dregs of my own will—
If it is so !

I beg you never say
That you will leave my way,
Because of this or that
Thing I have done
When I have sat
Beside you in the sun !

I dreamed you did not take it ill ;
And yet I scarcely know
Whether tonight you take it so.
And now, until
We two again shall meet
I needs must suffer pain
For a thing most sweet.
Shall ever I be quite so rash again !

EXILE

THE penitential throng, that whispers faint
Adown the tired-worn alleys of my dreams,
Today has sent its cry in lover's plaint
To move me by the old familiar streams.

So long, so long it is since I have said
One word of aught confronting us my love :
And all the bloom of June has grown dismayed
Once fragrant-blowing in a pillared grove.

O, we had wondered dear in rich estate,
Where Asia bent with her benignant grace ;
While that high arch that was fair Shelley's gate,
I wandered through, because of your sweet face.

But here today, the plaint of love lives keen
Within the shuttle of those sterile hours :
And I am troubled with what might have been—
We two together with the summer flowers !

SUNK ISLAND BATTERY,
Humber Defences.
1916.

RIVER SONG

ONE day I would be glad
And with all quiet be
Except your cadenced murmur
Beside the willow-tree.

One day I would be glad
With fields of king-cup gold :
One day of dancing water
Below the cuckoo-fold.

One day I would be glad
With crowned vermilion kings,
Whose scarves are lilies blowing
Where youth for ever sings.

One day I would be glad
With Oxford's poplared grace :
One day with love between us
And then—to lose your face.

MOON-THOUGHT

I COULD not write to you.
You did not say
What barren land
You had made faery-land;
What place of rest your presence knew;
And so, with these few lines of yesterday
I wait—and silence round,
Where you were found.

Let it be broken soon
It is too long
This silent strain
That I would break—in vain.
Yet see: across those trees, the moon
Just up I' ll please with some sad-fluted song :
He may be moved to tell
Where you do dwell.

Sept. 5th. 1915.

DIES ULTIMA

MY dear, the lilies weave
So fine within your hair just now :
I' ve never known them leave
So rare an anodyne
As these last days endow

Such wonder, dear, I see,
As hung above the deck and sail
Where love tricked Anthony :
While Egypt' censers swung
To work a golden tale.

God send you love to me
Once more, before our youth decays:—
I so imperfectly
Unlocked the scarlet door
To perfect these last days.

THE OLD OLD MEN

I KNOW thou art beautiful, thou,
As the milk-white foam of the sea
That romps at the foot of a cruel snag,
As the proud upcurving prow
Of a galley, exultantly
Biting a path past the crag
That crowns the terrible shore
The mermen work for Death's wide door.

I know thou art beautiful, thou,
As the pure white birds that rest,
They say, in the bosoms of Dorian men,
At peace and safe enow.
And all this is thy soul confessed
In the tunes of the old old men—
Fiddlers of dreams who play,
Fiddling the heroes, now grave, now gay.

Ah yes, but I love thee now !
I think it is known how much :
I spoke it at sundown one April day
As men left the tail of the plough :
I remember the soft sweet touch
Of thy cheek to my lips, the way
My arms close held thee ; and I pray
The fiddlers drew gold from the sky that day.

THE PERFECT FOOL

THE sadness of the night descends with sound
Of weeping dolorous as souls outworn
With pain ; your voice in the night I hear,
And sadness climbs the moon for children born.

No more in the day is sunlight strong in your eyes,
For they have put in out who loved you not :
They have no care and their laughs are shrill—
Not knowing that which I had and have not got.

I had your love and trust, and knew you fine ;
And then they came and struck you down so well,
I thought 'you no more good to see,
And dreamed you mean with the evil that men tell.

Yes, you, whose happiness was freed of care
As laughter born for children's holiday.
Now gone is the laughter, grey the sky,
Since men have slandered your name too well today.

And I had believed it all with a fool's concern,
That they were right, the perfect fool was wrong ;
Oh, God, the tears are with me now,
And in my heart the saddest, saddest song.

The saddest song, my dear, for men to sing—
A song of too little faith for given love ;
And the sound of your weeping here tonight,
Is knowledge bought with punishment enough.

THE APPLE ORCHARD

AN olden book is on my knee
And Italy's sky is shining
About the casement of my room
Where no sad fool is whining :
For love saith sorrow hath no sway,
And the soul hath no repining.

*O make a song upon a day
When apple trees are blowing ;
When maids go courtin' by the May,
Eyes sweet where love is showing.*

An olden book is on my knee
Its gages quaintly telling
Of clerks and knights and kingly pomp
Alive in summer's dwelling .
Where all the bees in haunted glades
Are busy with their singing.

*O make a song to dance alway
When apple trees are blowing ;
And you drink bier and suck a clay
While cocks are loudly crowing.*

Boccaccio's close were not more sweet
Than the pleasaunce that I look on,
Where marguerite and gilly-flower
Are nodding in profusion;
And love walks there in lily-white
Unto my sweet confusion

*O glad my heart upon a day
When apple trees are blowing ;
Fair Amoret is by the way
With eyes of Summer's showing.*

WHEN YOU AND I ARE AWAKE

IF I shall fill my little niche
In this world's April laughter ;
If I do'nt listen to loons who shout,
Or women who weep after ;
Then will you stretch to me your hand
To grant me sweet compelling
For all the ways of life to come
In gathering dreams for telling ?

Yes, when all's done, the curtain dropped,
And those who'd heard departed,
I know you'll not let emptiness
Leap on the seconds started !
For what are the cheers and shouts of 'em all
Unless you bend in scarlet,
With your silver bells of pride won free,
And drink in the golden goblet

To breath of flowers in hush at dawn
Where life of man is sleeping,
When only you and I are awake
To gaze on our life's reaping ?
Why, nothing at all, let 'em go to hell,
Their clapping and cheers for a stiver :
I want but you, your eyes so kind—
And God to reward the giver.

THE PIPES OF NOON

A TINY sprig o' the summer fair
Pipes upon the hill, up there.
What do they say, the pipes so rare.
So far away from me ?

*"They pipe o' the simple pleasures, lad,
Of children fine to see ;
Of good rich beer to make you mad,
And o' lassies courtin' thee !"*

O tiny sprig o' the summer fair,
Piping so faint up there,
What do they say, your pipes ablare,
So far away from me ?

*"Take heed o' the dark rich Romany,
And her man who keeps the shy ;
They're freer the soil than you or me,
And free with the fist me boy !"*

It's a tiny sprig o' the summer fair,
The village feast up there :
But the pipes move strange, my soul, and bear
My heart up out of me.

*"There'll be rich mad laughter, lad, tonight,
As they boys teks each his gel ;
But the pipes 'ull be still fore tomorrow's light,
And you an' me in Hell !"*

It's a tiny spring o' the summer fair,
Pipes on the hill up there :
Ah, what do they say the pipes so rare,
So far away from me ?

GIPSY NIGHT-THOUGHT

QUIET and close I would be with you,
Alone on the wide heath spaces,
Where all is alone save a fox, moon-peeping,
And veiled are the women's and children's faces
We both knew.

Alone, alone, let me be with you,
We two 'neath the moon's guinea-yellow :
We two awake and all the world sleeping,
As it sleeps for the gipsy fellow
To wander through.

O, I'd tell you how my heart is high
As the tide's foam-crested dancing,
How I alone may worship, knowing
The stars reflect my joy, down-glancing
From the sky.

A queen with a boundless kingdom you :
Eve of the wide heath-spaces ;
But my lone worship ends with the third cock-crowing,
And the road leads again to the children's faces
That worship you.

ST. GILES' NOON

I THINK there's no one like you:
Not here, or anywhere ;
And we had met, who'd parted
Before the hills grew fair ;

And I had been forgiven
Some fault that I had made ;
Our eyes sought each, and whispered
Those words we left unsaid.

And though' so swift our meeting,
It was a lifting breath
God breathes within His garden
To close the trance of death!

MOUSSORGSKY

To the Memory of Morfydd Owen.

THE keys that your hands stole across
Waked phantoms from the years ;
The voice of Muscovy I heard,
Her laughter and her tears.

Great Boris came to claim a throne,
Won torment for his care ;
I saw young Igor riding hard,
And night was in his hair.

I saw keen eyes of Tartar hordes
Piercing the battle-light ;
Yet the maids of Rurik danced with love
In Georgia's softer night.

Strong grew their lives, and heroes lived
Where the wolf and the deer are known ;
When lo ! your hands were stayed, were still,
And life—was left alone !

AMOR TRIUMPHANS

O H, there are those hours
In silver gleaming time
When I am lifted
On the knees of God.
If I looked down—
Ah, I could see
Cruel waters of world strife
Swirling and foaming
Round the snags of men,
To suck
And make him ugly
As a beast or wry-necked fool.

O you,
Ripe, pulsing, love !
The music of your voice
Surrounds my life.
I do not look
Upon that livid stream;
I stretch my hand
And touch your life,
Waking the songs of harps
And summer birds :
Waking a life of splendid dreams
Alive in pearly mist—
And dancing, dancing
In the throes of Time
Made perfect
As moon-bathers
Racing through the glades
O' summer nights !

A RECIPE OF FRANCOIS VILLON

IT is only out in the air you may hang your Love,
With the winds to whisper his death in the trees,
The last climbed hill you'll find will be high enough
To place the coal-black gibbet where he can
be swung
From off his knees.

Look never to right or left, but only kill,
If you'd play the part of a man again.
Think not of the eyes of vair, or the dear, sweet thrill
That you take from seeing the marvellous shape of
his throat—
You are serving Cain.

Think not of the curve caressing his cheek's rare rose,
Or the moment God held for your glory there,
That made you a god in time of the world's repose ;
Think not of these, nor any gems that are his,—
Do not dare !

When you leave the hill, the gibbet must take Love's
head,
Or the world will trample you down, deep down :
You may not weep that Love for a time is dead ;
You may only shout for a drum in the village street
And the mummer's clown.

SADI IN THE CITY

O HEAR of the nights when Mahdi drew his lute
From off the wall where it had hung so mute!
Do you remember how I bent my head to thine?
And dreamed the mirth that Hyder flung across the
wine

Between the softened strings.
Was the brave drum to hasten on our wedding morn?
The mirth of Love was keen
Inside the gates of Neruddin,
Under the moon, under the moon, where Jehan sings.
Do you remember love, remember now,
The days that were all ivory, the nights so princely born?

Those were the days of summer's skies,
The nights of dreams that Rama kindly buys
To strew the road where chance his favoured children's
feet,

And ours trod many a silver-flooded street
Till we were back once more

Within the street of mutes that Mahdi softened so
Of its dull ugliness,
To make so pure a happiness.

Where are you now? Where blows the almond-
blossom store

I think, my love; and of that garden's bloom,
Ah, who can say that Sadi's eyes again shall ever know?

SONG OF AN IMPENITENT

I HAVE won from thy garden Acrasia, thy shadows
 rosebowered by the slumbering sea ;
And yet I must hear how the cry and the shame of men
 rings ever in thee ;
Hast thou heard in thy groves of Acrasian doom, their
 voices rise, falling in pain ?
O Desire of the World, O thou curse of the strong and
 the weak in their hopes—not again
Shall the cry of my soul go out to that shore where thou
 shamest the quick of thy dead ;
All thy lilies lie low, of thy rose nought remains but the
 thorns in paths I tread.
There is weaving of songs with those cries of despair
 that are lifted from lips of thy slain ;
And magical sweet are the songs, which men hearing
 cannot trust to regain:
So wondrous the notes, yet as evil, and deadly, as
 brooding bituminous lakes.
Or red are the lips to allure, controlling the voice of the
 chant, which awakes
In the breasts of strong men the fires released by the
 snake in the groves of God,
Which leap and consume, or lie latent and passive,
 awaiting the will of thy nod.
Men weep for a touch of thy lips, of thy hair, recking
 nought of the terrible pain.
Ah, thou goddess, clothed in thy white, thy waist
 encinctured by that which has lain,
Charmed by the notes of thy voice, and the warmth of
 thy blood since the world began ;

The snake girdles thy waist, and peers out from the
 peplos folds, catching the gleam if it can
 Of thine eyes, which men gazing in once, are caught
 by the shimmering beauties of sin,
 Deeming their lives set for ever, with the gems and
 the lights dancing within.
 I have gazed in thine eyes, I have felt the sting of the
 red rose lips that allure ;
 All thy songs have entered my breast, and the snake,
 as he watched, laughed, Acrasia, be sure.
 I too should be there, 'mong the waves of the dead that
 leap at thy feet in the years,
 Till they mingle with waves of the pitiless sea which
 have calmed their agonised tears.
 But lady, I came—not unarmed, as you thought, for a
 knife lay close to my breast.
 Yet, such was the power of thine eyes, and the bondage
 they held—love almost confessed.
 And thy soft white skin, pure as snow, 'gainst the glint
 of thy gold, and thine arms—cast
 Not in a mould that was mortal but a mould that gods
 hide in a house of the past—
 Clasped my body, till senses reeled, smitten with
 perfumes from heaven's embrace,
 The scent of thy hair that I breathed, and its texture,
 which wrapped us round, face unto face.
 Acrasia, how playd'st thou on strings of my heart till
 was wrought a tune of thine own !
 What trickery immortal controlled all the strings when
 the legions of passion were sown !
 And they came and made mock of me in thine arms,
 till the haft of my knife seared my breast ;
 As well had it been that the gleaming fair skin was a
 place where the steel could take rest,

For the warm red blood and its shades, to play on the
 pearl of thy flesh, was a sight
In my mind, that brought fierce desire to see thee
 death-stricken—pale in the night.
But will of such death is not given Acrasia, to me or to
 mine, so you send
Men forth who shall rot with those dead at thy feet—
 thou wert born without knowledge of end.
How fast I was held, how stupored, as all who have
 yielded to thee and thy kin ;
I fled from thy gate—but only to wish I had left my
 poor body within ;
For the songs that were sung are yet in my soul, and
 all my cunning is vain,
Though I cut thy hair so to stop my ears from the
 songs made with cries of thy slain,
Though I crept away soul-bleeding, torn—all too late
 Acrasia to win
Any battle with you—for comes never the day when the
 gate shall be fastened within !

MAN'S EMPTY NIGHT

O MORE soul-stirring beauty than was known
To Mary by the Sepulchre of tears,
Upon your face the Lord has softly thrown
Such beauty as a light for furthest years.
Oh love, my love, I am too frail for this,
This treasure that you give to me, this leap
Of ecstasy when your warm mouth I kiss ;
I am delirious, and earth asleep ;
No souls exist at all but yours and mine.
Yet I am terrified because I see
How pitiful this fruit of God's design ;
How pitiful to love so utterly.
That when man is alone his empty night
Must make him careless of the coming light.

VISION

MY head has fallen forward, wholly dazed,
Because, sudden your beauty soft lives here
By me to-night—all perfectly appraised,
As magic of the woods by waters clear,
Delivered of moist herbs and eglantine.
I see the rare slope of your rounded throat,
Count all the altars of your beauty's shrine.
I see where joy, beside the cuckoo's note,
Drew me to knowledge of life's scarlet days.
Yet now, my dear, such days have drawn apart—
Live but as kings old memory obeys :
While here exceeding love consumes my heart ;
 What phantasy of truth must be my share,
 When absence beats love's rose to floors of care !

THE LAST KNOWN GATE

IF soon across the sunsets of the earth
They chance to write my name, my dear, will then
You be a little proud, and give my worth
More rich a splendour than is known to men
Soft wound with livery of an Eastern king,
Who sing by secret pools of tender queens,
Where carp of silver and of gold may cling
To jewelled life beyond man's time or means ?
If recompense so splendid I shall know,
The cincture of my life were perfected ;
For when, beneath the last known gate, I go,
I'd take the friendliness that your soul led
Within your eyes, and know the intimate yield
That your warm mouth, with royal beauty, sealed.

ABSENCE

UPON all tapestries of Summer's shrine
That show the garden of the sacred flower,
Where lawns are ever green for Valentine,
There, those who search, may learn your jewelled power.
What man or woman here within the land,
What emperor or prince of mortal pride
With carpets and with spice of Samarkand
Can single out such magic for his guide
As this pearled marvel of your slender years.
No other gem can fall within my days ;
Yet it is absent now, and evening's fears
Show manhood's part grown difficult to praise :
The hoot of owls is desolate and thin,
And to their revels sleep must pass me in.

HAVE YOU BETHOUGHT YOU

MY love of most complete and dearest worth,
Has ever breath of years, one day all spent,
Mingled with thought of present smiling earth ?
Have you bethought you how so soon is sent
To this poor passionate heart the Worm of Death
With twined and intimate corrupt caress ?
Have you bethought you, how that your dear breath,
Bathing the rose upon your mouth, shall press
One day no more betwixt its petalled home ?
How all exceeding beauties exquisite
Of limbs, of eyes, of hair, of cheek, shall come
One day, perhaps, within that open night,
Where sheep go plaintive on a lone highway,
And ecstasy of love is far away ?

THAT AT THE LAST

HAVE you bethought you, dear, of all of this,
When I have stooped to murmur of my love
And hover all my soul within a kiss ?
If you have not, my dear, I would enough
Of our rich love were fairly magnified
To blest succession of your soul's delight,
That at the last we be most satisfied !
Oh, I do beg of you to give me right
Of all that in great love is heavenly :
All ecstasy of lovers, told agone
In work of vellum and of ivory,
When in a forest's noon bright armour shone,
Piercing the green with light for Vidal's eyes,
As gracious gallants rode to Paradise !

UPON THE BED OF MERMEN KINGS

YOURS is the loveliness of which men dream
When they have gently lifted robes of peace,
And with their naked souls essayed the stream,
Within whose waters fish may never cease
To whisper in the ear delirium
Of Love's most passionate ecstatic hour.
The peach, the grape, the lemon, and the plum,
And all the colour Indian islands shower,
Is blooming in those water-whisperings
Of shadowy fish, and jealous secrecies ;
Until, upon the bed of mermen kings,
The last high-infidel of bliss Love sees ;
And as he leaps and kisses soft his eyes,
Yours are the lips that yield before his sighs.

RAISE UP MY FAITH

SUCH beauty is the magic of old kings
Who webbed enchantments on the bowls of night,
Who stole the ocean-coral for their rings
And samite-curles of mermaids for their light ;
Who sent their envoys from the courts of Kand,
To find the blue-flowered crown of ecstacy
That grows beneath a Titan's quiet hand.
The beauty that is yours is grown to me
More fine than furthest snows in golden Ind,
More fair indeed than doves, who draw the cars
Of purpurate belief in monarch's mind,
With benediction of the ultimate stars.
Because of all this knowledge born of you,
Raise up my faith in stone, and keep men true.

LOVE'S EASTER TIDE

I THINK your splendid loveliness must be
As silver of the streams that glides between
The yellowness of hills caressingly ;
Or ancient secrecies of Summer's queen
Who draw the rout of quiet eve to falls
Of fountained mirth in tender covert glen.
The purity of sun-kissed waters calls
Within your skin, such colour, as in men
An old Venetian master only gives,
When he has seen the beauty of a Christ,
More excellently rare where beauty lives.
This final praise from me you have enticed ;
Now let a calm obscurity abide
To soften Love's more passionate Easter-tide.

FOR SO MUCH LOVING

NOW let the shadows dark, unerringly,
With all the rains of nights and days, beat down
The faint and utterly tired soul of me.
To so intense a loving who can own?
Of so much pride in living who shall know
When the last gift of sleep be for his eyes,
And voices of lost heroes, faint and low,
He hears disputing for the ancient prize
Of love, beyond the threshold where he stands?
But they shall hush when I shall enter there;
For I shall come with chill and empty hands,
And weeds of ancient mourning only wear.

O shadows dark, I pray you compass me—
For so much loving, Love abandons me!

HEAP NO MORE BEAUTY

MY dear, be quiet a little now, be quiet,
' For I would sleep, and would forget the day ;
Would dream perchance how that the sun is set
To hide me from the last most aimless way
Have done, for pity's sake have done ; allow
That I pass out with calm austerity.
The play is finished, and I have made my bow
With just a simple grace God lent to me.
Heap nō more beauty on to beauty then,
Lest God forsake and I be stripped of power
And wander drunken in the courts of men !
Let us keep perfect that one beauty's hour !
 Perhaps keep thou in mind a little yet
 Thy friend, and after, if thou wilt—forget !

DEATH AND LOVE

THUS Earth's full-written page of love now turns ;
The wind of Death has touched the leaf—and lo!
A flame is caught across my eyes and burns
Their vision, that when again I look below
No words be written on the further page.
O love, beloved, may no message lie
Upon the white, to comfort and assuage
This agony of grief and midnight cry ?
See, how the fingers' custom may not fail,
They turn the pages yet and yet again.
O love, my love, God finishes the tale ;
Naught here but whiteness, and my numbing pain
Abroad among the woods of God's delay,
Vain stirring 'mid their stems, to know your way.

TO GERALD CROWE

*Who has given so much to poetry, and of it has given
so much to me.*

VISITATIONS

*"If I have nothing better to do," said Jarno, "than
tell you stories, you too have time to listen to me"*

WILHELM MEISTER

TOUCHE LE BEAU

THE clock was striking on the hour
From the gaunt and sombre tower,
Striking on the hour of doom,
Striking, while the household loom
Lay overturned, and all the glow
Of housewifery lay low.

A cat at empty chamber doors
Sees nought upon the shining floors
But her own image, lonely, strange,
Where she had seen before a range
Of colour-decked and knighted folk
Whom all the echoes woke.

The echoes all so silent, still,
Affect the creature there with ill.
She dabs her ears with slender paws,
And hunger at her vitals gnaws :
Upon the house of Touche Le Beau
Lurks evil none may know.

From place to place the creature roams,
Peers in rooms of musty tomes,
Peers where arras hangings grace
The deeds of knighted courtly race.
Yet only brooding silence there
And evil in the air.

Touche Le Beau, Touche le Beau,
What evil is it that you know,
What deed is punished in your house,
Deserted but for cat and mouse :
Where silence broods, where evil grows,
And why—nobody knows !

The sun is down behind the hill,
The shadows deepen—deeper ill
Seems to cloak the house of woe.
Hark the owl's hoot there below
In witch's oak or wizard's yew :
Tu-whit ! tu-whit ! to-whoo !

Within the house the cat has crawled,
Where at their ease the guards had sprawled,
Up the carven stairs to where
Are chambers that are gaunt and bare,
Save for beds of straw and hay
Where serving lads would play.

Before one chamber lit quite ill
She sat for long and gazed her fill.
Within a man lay sprawled at length,
And seemed as if he'd lost his strength.
A gutted candle weakly flamed—
His face in light it framed.

Touche le Beau, Touche le Beau,
The sands of life are running low,
The dance of hopes in the years is done,
And all sweet things that life has won ;
The clocks are striking out the hour
That ends your waking power.

Touche le Beau, Touche le Beau,
The candle gutters very low ;
Soon 'twill out, and you will pass
With ghostly step along the grass
Of churchyards grown for spirit-folk,
With moonbeams for a cloak.

And then the night-wind crept to him
Where he lay in the chamber dim ;
And the cat with dismal moan
Saw the end of the flickering cone
Of light that framed the face so thin,
And its haggard, ghastly grin.

Then the ghost he gave with a cry of fear,
But no one was by to drop a tear
In the splendid house of Touche le Beau—
Silent and lone, why, I do not know.
And the cat in the dark sat wed
To the chamber of the dead.

And the echoes roused fall silent, still ;
And who's to say that calm is ill ?
The cat will follow her master soon
To howl at the side of his ghostly shoon.
Just one more cry and the house of woe
Will be hushed for ever so.

VICTORIAN VIGNETTE

TOCCATAS, sweetest minuettes,
The songs his sister had,
The son next door played oft at eve,
When I was a small lad.

Then from my window I would watch
A dim old panelled room ;
The mother in the window-seat
Where hyacinths would bloom,

She wore a cap of Irish lace,
And cuffs as white as snow ;
The withered fingers, cunning still,
Flashed needles to and fro.

And oft she'd nod, as one well pleased
With that upon her knee.
Then I would hear an old man say—
"Bert, once again, for me !"

More often though, the three I'd see
Move in their garden's peace :
The old man, and the young, the first
Glad day of Spring's release.

Then in the sun they'd lurk an hour
To tell the promised year ;
And how the daffys soon would bloom ;
How mother might sit here,

And see them pot geraniums,
And bring the fuchias out—
But here the maid's step on the flags
Stole what the rest was about.

Yet when the summer came at last,
As oft it was my way,
I stole up to my window-seat
To view the close of day ;

And see how sweet their garden's bloom,
How good their jasmine's smell,
That minded me of wondrous isles
Arabian stories tell.

And then the garden's peace below
Grew rich with all those three ;
And Bert had his rose watering-can,
And did all carefully,

As when he touched his minuettes,
Or played "In Old Madrid",
Or any songs lost Linda loved—
He playing as she bid.

But oft I'd wonder from my nook,
Which flower most cherished one
Within that garden blessed by all,
Most tended by the son.

And after many years I knew
That creeping jasmine flower
That clung about the blackened wall,
Most loved in lover's power.

It was the old man loved it most ;
He'd planted it one day
When in the splendid belfrey near
They'd rung to tell the way

Of royal birthdays, and the health
For all loyal men to drink :
And so the golden past he'd muse,
And with the present link.

Yet all this from my window, I
Had viewed with humble mind,
That blessed those humble pleasures there,
Of old folk meek and kind.

But came a day, I'd climbed the stair,
And strangers walked the close ;
And trodden and dishevelled were
The violet and the rose.

I had no music then to hear
From son, or from the maid :
The owner of the garden had
Within the grave been laid.

And some months later echoed, where
The minuettes had moved,
The roughened jests that sped the goods
Those aged folk had loved.

And that was at the winter's end,
But now in summer heat
The thud of blows has drawn me up
Again to my window-scat.

I learn, what in my heart I dreamed—
The jasmine is no more :
For now, rude men hew at the wall
Where it hung close before.

THE RED PAGE

*To Robert Browning and Gabriel Rossetti
for days in company.*

I'VE seen you steal by arras hem
Flitting with speech of your proud high dame,
Or legs across in the window seat
Noting with glee the baron's phlegm—
The matter: a bill for how much meat
Those rascally pages have seemed to eat—
To ruin his name their knavish aim.

I've seen you flit down narrow stairs
That chill the liver of decent men.
Then to the battlements you 'll climb,
And Baron calling—until he swears
The birch that boy shall have this time.
You've hid his spurs—a further crime:
This week 'twas ten—why, another then.

And so Red Page with roguish eyes,
Limber limbed and debonair,
These catalogue of tricks I hear
Are Puck's mad pranks of half your size.
I wonder Raoul de Montfouyer
If in your eye would stand a tear—
You impish care of golden hair?

Aye, came a year in the castle's age
When all its stones—had each a tongue,
Had cried aloud in mortal pain.
And in that year found my Red Page—
And many years that have since lain
Oped to the rot of winter rain—
With Sorrow hung, no pranks that stung.

The Baron's son—young Gilles de Vaux
Raoul watched upon a Spring's sweet day
Ride thro' the gate in helm and steel.
Three days Raoul waited the bitter blow—
Since the day his lady, the mother of Gilles,
Had called her son and bade him kneel
To hear her say and take his yea.

In her flowered motley Summer came
Before Gilles entered into power.
With more pomp far they brought him home
Than worldly feats had any claim.
'T was the 'Silver Lady's Tower' Raoul clomb,
Who was starved till she came dust and loam :
'T was fitting bower for a bitter hour.

From the chamber's slit Raoul watched the road—
A ribbon of yellow thro' the plain below
To a necklet string in the verge away.
"But one glad sight and my heavy load
Would sink in the dust; I'd sing all day
If brought they my lord with his laughter gay,
And the tale of the foe he'd smitten low."

Ah, a speck on the road, yet its growth be slow.
No dust cloud, helm flash, or glitter of spear—
What means such sadly passing folk,
Where are the banners, the brave show ?
They're hard by the gate now—few but spoke.
Four carry a burden beneath a cloak:
Is it a bier they bring home here ?

"Now may God forfend that what they bear
Is young my lord with grievous hurt !"
The Red Page sped from the Lady's Tower
As he'd never sped down a winding stair.
"Our Lady forfend this one dread hour !"
As he reached at last his lady's bower
And knelt at her skirt ere speech desert.

At his news as pale as a whittled wand
She rose—stiff as a shaft well sped,
And bade the Red page mend his ways
If he'd win her favour or else beyond.
His torrent of words a moment daze,
Then strike such a chill as if life's sweet days
In her breast were wed to a winter bed.

Hark ! a tumult without—she'd know its worth.
And forth she went with unseeing eyes.
The page stood motionless, lax afraid.
"She is stronger than I, I cannot go forth
If 't is young lord Gilles I saw there laid ;
These tremblings must stop ere I see Death's trade—
What ! my soul's eyes for the common prize ? "

Gilles lay at rest on a splendid bed,
And tall wax tapers about him stand.
At the Baron's court a cardinal's crew
A lustre of pomp upon it shed.
High lords and dames—a prince or two,
Assembled there for the day nigh due
When those of the land should kiss Gille's hand.

The day was come, the sun a gleam
Shed a halo about where young Gilles lay.
To shew their sympathy first there came
To kiss if they would—the cardinal's team:
Then high-born lords and the ladies of fame
To look on this young knight whose name
Outshone the day of all knightly play.

The Page in Red stood waiting his turn
To tender the last sad homage due
To his friend he loved with no lying show ;
Stood waiting, and knew his soul to burn
As he watched the purple move to and fro—
As if—oh, a matter of form you know,
And that was true if he knew such crew,

Last came his turn—low enough in the scale,
"Now young my lord the last upstart fool
Has finished pecking your hand in play,
And yonder women who weep and wail
As like to grief as a night to day
Have plucked enough heart to grow more gay,
This love I school shall now know rule.

And the sun-a-dance on his coat of red
Raoul the page from his place in the hall
Stepped out from the motley he'd grown to hate.
They saw the young figure approach the bed,
And hoped he'd make haste as the hour was late—
A tedious business this having to wait
Then they saw nigh the pall he seemed like to fall.

Said some—"What a time he is to be sure
Gaping there with eyes like a sheep,
Not a movement or sound—the lad's caught the sun!"
But no good folk you're wrong on that score.
Yet a countess nigh titters to see the fun
Of a page at a mourning his mind on the run
With the wine that to sleep 'stead sends him to weep.

But the Red Page recovers and a gasp from the hall
Has met the daring that seems to hold him:
The face of the dead is between his hands.
And there and then in the face of all
He kisses the brow cold death demands—
Sweet toll exacted from life's fair lands:
And his eyes grow dim, for the angels fold him.

He heeds not the Baron's harsh words in his ears—
Though they're biting enough and to spare did he know:
Hears not, till a heavy touch at his shoulder,
And a voice loud and harsh bade him go take his tears
And his insolence too, before he is older.
He shakes off the hand, grief making him bolder—
"To your pride such a blow is good my Lord Vaux."

Then he threw back his head and laughed aloud—
A tinkle of mirth that hinted at pain.

"My lord Baron, fond fools have I seen this day,
Full many who've scraped, aye and smirked and bowed
Before these remains of this last of your clay,
But never a heart had a message to lay
Before this remain of knightly strain."

"No, my lord Vaux, it was left for your page
To shew you the right of this mumming play."
And the Red Page glanced fearless awaiting the blow
From the mailed first of his lord in his bitter rage.
But it fell at his side. "One word more Lord of Vaux!
The carl I shall meet who struck Gilles low—
So my lord till the day that I win my way!"

And with that from the hall strode my page in his glory.
The Baron stood speechless—his heat in his quarrels
King Death at his elbow was powerless to alter.
And since page has retired so will I and the story
For my voice has grown hoarse to the twang of my
psalter.

But should at my ballad' you stumble or falter
Just turn to its morals and you'll gain a few laurels!

ISYED HADI HASAN

A ROMAN CITY

*O lovers laughing towards the moon,
Forget not any the least song you make
In the high time of love, whereby you may
Gladden the chill heart of your latter noon,
And come by gentleness in your grey years.*

GERALD CROWE

CHRYSOLOGAS SPEAKS OF GIFTS FOR HIS MISTRESS

TO win you the pearls of the Earth shall be garnered,
And a throne to trouble the blaze of Paradise,
While glow-worm magicians shall busy with wisdom's tears
For a mystery unknown to the night-jar's eyes.

The beauties of night and of day shall be for you
In the intimate vigils Sybils garner for power,
What time the dews soft-blown from the pipes of God
Make fragrant the life of dawn's raced hour.

Then fieldfare's song shall be shrill for my triumph,
While rivers of crystal shall pour a most consummate wine,
The bridal of Life I shall wear for Love's sweet token,
That autumn may never incarnadine.

SONG : FOURTEENTH CENTURY

CAME Maria wet with dew,
Came Maria swift and joyous,
Bringing roses—my madonna,
Bringing roses wet with dew.

Forget-me-nots of tender blue
Raised their heads sweet to employ us,
As we softly—my madonna,
And her lover, kissed anew.

Birchen bower and hornbeam close
Held our laughter keen and ringing ;
And I daily—for madonna,
Picked my fairest garden rose.

Oh, 'twas fine, so fine and free,
Through the splendid summer singing
Sweet stornelli—to madonna,
With her cithern on her knee.

But at eve of Hilary,
Comes a bird's song soft with sorrow,
Bringing tidings—to madonna,
From the coast of Barbary.

In a stronghold grim and stern
Love is set, and all to-morrow
Vainly sighing—my madonna,
Never may the spindle turn.

Alack, alack, for Hilary
Sang the bird's song soft with sorrow :
Love is set—far from madonna,
On the coast of Barbary.

TUSCAN LOVE SONG

HEIGH ho ! you linger still ;
Oh, why do you stay,
Simonetta, my love, whom I kissed away,
And dreaming my love to kill,
Ah, sadly speaks the day !

Without song the night I have waited,
Without life until you come—
Why is it you do not come ?
The sun has sunk to his purple bed,
The wind has jostled the poppy's head :
All my pleasaunce with sorrow mated.

Heigh ho ! you linger still ;
Oh, why do you stay,
Simonetta, my love, whom I kissed away,
And dreaming my love to kill ?
Ah, sadly speaks the day !

O love, from passionate madness
I pass to a mist of tears,
Which arise in a night of fears.
Ah, the summer noon saw you go to the town—
And what lips now at the hem of your gown
And I alone with sadness.

Heigh ho ! you linger still ;
Oh, why do you stay,
Simonetta, my love, whom I kissed away,
And dreaming my love to kill ?
Ah, sadly speaks the day !

CHRYSOLOGAS FALLS AGAIN INTO THE WAY OF LOVE

YOU stole into my dreams and calm determination,
You stole upon my new and rigid rules
Of Lenten fasts, and full controlled will:
You stole with all that slender majesty,
That mocking laughter and swift tenderness,
With taste for my madonnas and for flowers.
And I, so slow at first, and then so fast,
Sped down the avenues of love again,
Intolerable crucifixion knew again.
What arrogance of ways was sped at last,
What pride lay prostrate in the duke's highway,
Since here was life and love replete again,
Yet pierced with strange intolerable pain,
Springing from soil too dolourously known.
Can there be care within your heart to learn
The heart of me whose manhood tumbles down,
Who is become so tremulously weak
The buffets of the world he cannot check?
He is become—has he your ear or not?—
Become as weak as any leveret
With but three morns upon the green of God!
He is become a child no more a man:
A child that kneels to Mary, mother—eyes
That search a face for full compassion spent.
Ah, will you spend as Mary mother of Christ,
And will you bend o'er all his souls dispute
That he may murmur, although his tears shall blind,
Such thanks to you as you have never heard?

O you, with such fair head of richened life,
To you his lips shall dedicate with joy
All that is made account of by the Mages
Who judge of beauty twixt their pains of Christ
With visions only Reni's* youths have seen

At hush of night I pray, who prays so rare,
The Virgin give me strength for tasks ahead :
That through the beauties she shall work in me
The streets of life shall paved be for you
In such degree as Ispahan and Thebes
And all that cinctured magnitude of power
Which glittered in the first proud morning of the world !
What more high policy of love can I
Subscribe madonna to your innocence ?
And when tomorrow you shall visit me
Shall not the picture you see here awaken
You to how man's soul moved piteously,
So you will wake to some new knowledge born
Of things that shall enrich my soul again
With dreams as hover o'er the ships of kings ?
Shall peradventure look within, and slip
New manhood on my day's deliverance.

* Guido Reni the painter.

BECAUSE OF ANGER

THE ways of Earth that twine about more secret
ways of Death
Grow worn and shrivelled, because tonight the heart of
careful dreams
Has played me false and humbles me for mockery
of men,
Since you are angry, heart of these new days, because
of one
Whose beaten anger burnt for you like a new candle's
light,
Its beams flung far upon Night's floor for housewife's
masquerade :
And I without the easement lost in wit of such brave
show
The manner of my love. Yet then you spoke, and I
was silent,
Light of anger being quenched by web of midnight pain
Too mindful of your being. And now the marsh-reeds
droop and lie
Where no bird sings, but sighing plaint for over piteous
ways.
Oh, may your anger cease to burn, and chance your
feet about
The marge of this my sorrow, since I am held where
quick sands grow
About the feet to drag the head beyond the bounds
of day,

While witches shiver scaley hands above the soul,
and soon
Will lock it in their closets of despair. O come, and cry
Words of forgiving to one whose anger burnt because
of you !
Next sweep upon a dulcimer a song of life's best hope
Wherein be feasting with pale queens for whom Love's
beauty flows
As perfect as a psalmody in book of Lenten hours.

BEATA SOLITUDO

DEAR love, there never touched the world's faint breath
Upon our play. Here with my cheek to thine
I dwell in gardens West of the Dawn and East
Of the Moon, beyond the pinnacles of time
And life. The crimson trapping-bells of love
Lend all their notes to golden noons wherein
We race, breaking the whispered marge of pools
With flash of fawn, and seeking all the mirth
Of Summer's lips. I deem these chased hours—
And six upon the skein of my sweet joy
I've threaded now—more rare than orient pearls
Upon the ivory of costly slaves.
And music we have stolen subtler far
Than reed-song's voice between the lips of Pan
When from the sedges of the brook Molpeia
He gathered it to wake a humid noon.
And did Death come with shrilly tread and swift,
He would not spoil our blossomed time my love
With ebon shade, for we should view a home
Of fretted heights, a palace shaped by hands
More cunning than Arabian mages', and reared
Ere monsters quarrelled on the high world's ridge,
Or sea-orcs shrieked the Polypheme for friend,
Or time, or earth, or space made covenant
To shelter love, ere he with gentle sigh

His reign began. Here with my cheek to thine
I work the warp and woof of this one hour
Unsullied by the world's faint breath, that when
Unto the world we must return, we may
In rich recall forget the day's tired end,
So dream of all the magic wonder-worth enshrined.

THE ILEX GROVE

IN the noise of the surf that gets down to the bones
of men I loved you :
In the noise of the wind crying out like a beast to the
heath-moon's light ;
And I loved the white of your body, like milk on foam
of the breakers,
And I dreamed your limbs sped in hymnals to Lucetius
piercer of night.

Yea, the strength of your naked youth should shine
pure in a grove of Ilex :
So wondrous, so perfect your youth, in the beauty
godlike of man ;
And though I be tossed like a cockle in the tumult of
years I would win you :
Yea, though I be smote to the knees in the hoof-
cloaked glades of Pan.

For the glamour of splendour, and truth of your nature
is perfect as beauty,
Drawn to the nets of the fishers, who delve in meads
sea-deep :
And Love afloat in the swirl of the moon's high con-
course is shriven,
If we two live perfect together before we are put to
sleep.

THE DREAMER

ABOVE the shining plains of Iskander I saw you lean
In your young blossomed youth, you spoke so soft
and low
That all the ravished shoots about your feet did bend,
To kiss, and take awares, the secrets lovers know.

O youth, perfect and ripe as summer's popped sleep,
Dreaming you stand with limbs of fawn 'gainst the
flowering bean :
Was ever the night or the dawn so lovely to you as
today,
When Iskander's plains give light of the corn's deep
burnished sheen ?

Dream on ! ravished your ears I know with a minstrel's
song,
Who sang in the past, yet endures as the song of the
gull to the foam ;
Dream you on till you wake at the touch of a great
king's glory—
And the magical songs from the seven hills shall lead
you home.

TO A. E. COPPARD AND EDWARD J. O'BRIEN

ESCAPE

To stimulate the imagination is to produce the deepest, the most pertinacious emotions. To repress it is to chill the soul, so that even the clearest perception of the truth remains without the joy and impetuosity of conviction.

GEORGE SANTAYANA

LAOLUS

I WORSHIP thee, dear Singer of the South.*
And since you trod so fair the flinted paths
Where agony for sorrows rends the soul,
I would for need of comfort of thy hand
Address thy spirit perfected in death !

O Master, much that was thy state in days
Of thy fair city's power is mine today :
Exiled in interest of a bitter need,
I rot—and love, God knows, I think my love
Was fine as thine, and won beneath the moon,
Rots too, because the liquor of its need
Is spilled, and sucked by lust of battle-dust.
My tongue, as thine, was tied, till love unloosed
And bade me sing for two tumultuous years
Within the burgeoning of Oxford's grace,
Which grace, in time of limes, is fair as thine
Where Arno's yellow life has nurtured song's
Most immemorial harmony.

* Dante Alighieri.

Shall I remember now the nights of Love,
My feet so sore beset, that they despair
My body shall succumb to fearful hells
In shape of beasts, whose paps between the trees
Do ooze, and give forth milk that I must drink;
Who mock, heaping on curses in strange tongues
Because my armour is not wrought, my sword
Still sleeping on the wall; Athenian cunning
Is all I have to combat them, and this
Because a fever burns within my bones,
Is hard to use, and balm so far removed,
So far as is the pleasure of my love,
Who clothes her tempered hours with loveliness
As a famed queen beneath the Jumna's moon.

As once you walked, and walking kissed of pain,
So now walk I amidst a forest's gloom.
The paths, they circle, turn, and traverse back
In full fantastic windings, and the lengths
Of brambles interweave to catch the foot;
With dusk the piercing call of owls I hear,
And one sits o'er my head—within his beak
The gauge of my own hazard for his melancholy,
While none can lead me forth to kiss the dew.
"O Master-friend, for greater torment sent,
In that jewelled hour when Argive Helen breathes
Again for men upon her daughter's lips
The secrets of the perfected pale rose,
Three cowed forms arise in vicious guise,
Their kind discovered by their swinish snouts
That not by any means they may conceal.
Then while the stars dance to their lord's design

These carry me within a Lazar house,
Till dawn's shrill clarion wakes as night expires.
These nights my pallet is beset by knaves
Whose minds are stunted, and mostly sorely vexed :
Upon their days no light may ever shine,
But they must toil unceasing 'neath the heel
Of those who have no study of their care :
May I remember here the nights of love ?

Dear friend, as Oedipus, whom incest cursed,
Whose loathing grew more terrible with time,
So now my loathing grows who lingered once
With silken sweet brocade in proud domain,
Since night but brings a feast that I assist,
Where man knows not his Maker's hand ; this brute
Here by my side his belly so compels,
That like a monkey, platter he must lift
Upon his tongue, to bring its surface pure.
And when at last I quit this Circean rout,
To seek escape under the quiet trees,
Scarce have I moved but owls mock in the wood,
While their arch-priest upon his perch o'erhead,
At morn, at noon, at dusk, does bow me thrice,
That I do know him god of ruined hopes :
For true, oh, true is this, who have had word,
My home, the nest they schemed for long to take,
Yet might not wrest, at last is mine no more.

When I return from my last wandering,
When in the moon of night I watch with love
My city's sleep, my feet shall turn away
From benediction of one towered shrine
That Walter Merton reared to keep his name
Safe for the years in his earnest scholars' eyes,

My heart too full for eyes to search the spot
That has no ruins that the birds may haunt,
But standing firm below that Gothic height
Doth know another's hand for cherishing :
Laertes' son were better pleased to see
Those stones that he might kiss, since they were his—
But mine, ah, no, I may not kiss them now—
Yet for their present master none shall speak.
A child they weaned to life, and in full time
The spirit of their hallowed place was his;
And many sorrows, many joys he sipped,
But yet did linger there till he was man.

Him I shall meet, scarce knowing him for me,
Since he is frail become from constant war,
From blow on blow, whose only mail was love ;
Only the lilies that do twine so close
About his mail I see may not be torn :
Their essence, when the body they enclose
Is dust, shall rise to kiss the walls he loved,
And ease their ardours on the leafy spray,
Where Autumn comes to splash her Paphian cup.
An alien foot hath passed the threshold now,
Now for another shall the lilac flame,
Creep swift within the window's harbourage,
Where that young head, beloved so very well,
Would sit, with hush for Lancelot's bitter pain.
O Joy, who whispers here, ah, when again
Will your red shoes skip high within my life :
For memories, all memories are these,
That Laolus doth send to ease my pain !

Yet hearken now, how he does cleanse my soul,
And aids to balance Joy's fast withered bloom ,
For these are visions Laolus doth send
To ease the soul's escape from bitter ill !

For my heart's ease, and through the day,
As coming from the forest's edge, where
She displays her radiant fabrics to the blue,
There bloweth soft a wind between the stems,
And with this wind there cometh sound of pipes,
As sweet as wakens kings, whose wine is spilled
When mannikins have spent their wits in vain
To wheedle constancy and speed the feast.
'T is only when this gracious wind is blown
About my face, to stir the tangled furs,
That I have aught of ease, or dreams of life,
Because the spells that breathe its haste are mine.
For then I may forget a space the wounds
The stricken form of Beauty has received,
Who flies gaunt victim to this lust of war.
Only then I may forget the slain—
The stillness of my Guido's hand, whose worth
Was ever as thy Cavalcanti's share.
And then the cock declares the dawn, and sound
Of bells o'er village greens are mine;
The rainbow and the curved hills are brought,
And streams, and ruddy folk upon their farms,
With scent of fodder crowding on my state:
The wakened trout and heron, perking cry
Of moor-fowl in the reeds, is brought amain
For me to move among with one I chose,
Because his love for these did quicken mine.

For long I was content to listen, quiet—
Amazed as Love in his first wakened noon.
But as I gained the better of my swoons,
To learn more fully of my ecstasy
Was centred in my soul, as firm as in
That woman's whom the first fair garden mewed.
And so a day I chanced to stray afar,
Until that outer forest rim was reached ;
And there, the fair contriver of my bliss
My wandering sense beheld, yet might not touch.

O Master, Sweet Divine, I there did see,
As that fair Fesole of thy delight,
A hill all crowned with light, and vernal love ;
And gathered on the summit, three straight trees,
Of beech—three kings, whose silver cloaks were bright,
Whose helms did cool the mouth with their rich hue,
And at whose feet the wood anemone
Did flaunt her fairy grace, to romp the wind,
And tease the elfin flock who gathered there,
Who held their revels, and who brought their gifts
To one who haunted that high place of joys—
The tender Warden of the Gains of Life :
For there he stood whom my eyes shy beheld,
To grow more bold since he did face the sun.
And all the foam of all the seas had seemed
To gather each his several property,
And centred in the freshness of the skin
That gleamed and shimmered there against the blue,
As changing as Ezekiel's fabled wheels ;
And next I saw his hands to stray
Upon a pipe, that at his lips was set,
While I remembered all things sweet more strong,

Than in between the stems of forest gloom
My mind refreshed, went back to long ago
When out of Colchis, riding goodly beam,
I faced the vizards of strong mariners,
All swinked with the scorch of orient suns,
And yet was troubled, since, where love embarked,
I saw, when she returned, that these same men
Proclaimed a song as Priam knew,
When heralds bore the worst that he might hear ;
And so through all my states was sorrow weft.
But then again did other matters come to me :
As from some place of sun-kissed hills,
Where tiny steeples nestle in the valleys,
Came then unto mine ears the sound of bells,
Most sweet, most lovely, and most rare to hear :
Therein I knew more strong the joy of folk,
Where noon's impetuous array is heard
Proclaimed, and old men's pipes are taken up
Again, because king chanticleer abroad,
Has tossed the note to banish sleep his realm.
I knew where some aged gaffer at his gate
Saw writ within his smoke the years removed,
When hollyhocks and foxgloves shrined the gem—
The maid of his youth's first mad fine delight:
Where she had stood within the jasmin frame,
Above the path that led up to the door
Ajar, on which the single horse shoe hung,
That had not done its duty well, but idly
Served its master, since the room he loved
Was robbed of one fair shape to ease the heart.
I knew where in some northman's home, the bairns
Were gathered by the hobs to make the songs—

Those songs our parents love—wide-eyed with glee,
In that true faith that makes the English home.
And there were other treasures flung pell-mell,
Full many more than I can make a tale.

But, *here at last*, I come upon that time
When at my side a spirit softly spoke.
I turned there at the forest edge, and saw
A stranger, tall of aspect and proud mien ;
And I did know him even as thy shade,
Immortal, proud, inviolate sad friend.
“Wouldst know more of the youth who crowns the hill ?”
Was asked of me, whose thought was proven thus
In that soft southern accent that I loved.
Then mournfully I told how I was held,
And might not leave that spot, lest worse befall.
But then my hand was taken, and we crossed
The fringe, to where the burdock and the thyme
Did mark the foot’s ascent to ecstasy :
And all the while that music ravished me,
And care and sorrow, misery and pain,
Was loosed from off my back, as Christian’s load
When he did face the fresh new-gathered hope.
Then that dear image of thy earthly mould
Did soothe my whirling mind with calmer talk
Of this new Latmian of the subtler spells.
And oft we paused beside a Jesu-shrine,
O’er which the juniper his berries lowly hung,
To bend us in humility and love,
Till last we stood beside the beauteous youth
Who played, and steadfast looked towards the sun.

And while we stood there waiting on his word,
My knees did shake with summit of desire
To know the truth of all these marvels here.
And as the sun dipped fell I to my knees,
While birds did circle o'er my head, as from
A city far below they sped with cries
Of joy, as keen as those Assisi knew ;
And all the air was filled as with one word
That made complaint, so sweet, so clear,
The flowers did bend and whisper each to each
In ecstasy of new-found happiness.

And so that hour when Day has cast the gauge
For Night to join with his sable glove,
Was filled from sea's brim unto mountain top
With but one word, the which was—Laolus.
And then my guide touched him upon the arm,
The while he turned, and with fine grace there left
Us for communion among the winds,
With all the wondrous spirits gathered near.

O then, my Dante, was my heart refilled
With dreaming, while there seemed fair promise too
Of splendid tasks to triumph over Death,
As there I knelt and prayed, the while I knew
His eyes caressed, and did well strengthen me.
At last I raised mine eyes in humbleness,
And tenfold was increased my ecstasy ;
For I did find his mien all goodly proved,
Even as his, who on Hymettus spake,
And gathered there his train of noble thought:
But this, more wondrous still, more finely poised—

For frailty was set upon brave youth,
In marvellous blend as noon's own coloured bow,
All mingled with such golden thought beyond,
That all the gods of Hellas bowed their helms.
And in his eyes, and on his noble brow,
Where gentle winds did blow the hair aside,
There stood declared, austerity of powers,
And signs supreme of transcendental life,
All bound together as a living glyph :
There stood removed, as on a corner-stone,
Above the bleeding world's chaotic spawn,
A flame so brilliant, so blinding, and so rare,
And bound with full a thousand tongues that sang,
I deemed it more than drunkenness divine
As is vouchsafed to saviours of the world.

Then curved his gracious lips to lift my heart
In cheer, as Christ might give to lepered souls.
Why would I seek at eventide his home
Where he did fresh his powers in music's art,
Enthusing all his veins with richer blood,
While from his notes leapt winged Rapture down,
To make men gods, did they but hearken fair,
Since music is the life of raptured thought,
To give men wings to slough their dismal caves ?

This last need being mine my speech took ease
To give him tidings of my bitter score.
"O lord of this fair place, and blessed calm,
In bitter need I come, in my dark hour,
For on my pride is poverty hard set,
And does ill wreck my back to strangle ease :
Not ease that I would set as crowning me,
But crowning those I love, in puissant joy :
Not ease that I would set to dub me prince,
But rendering princely, loves, who beggars are."

"Within the world that I did wander through
Ere I did reach the Wood of Broken Youth,
Where I did seek the everlasting Rose,
The joy of dulcet harmony and pride :
Where I did win and wear awhile the rose,
And was awhile in royal purple clad,
There, there, was set the fruit of life,
While I did eat, unwitting that the shade
Of that same wood, was set, a speck, within
The sunsets that I watched with leaping joys,
A speck to grow until it filmed the day.

"And even then I would not hear or see,
But even as in Egypt, once a king
Did o'er old Nile, his lamps, turn night to-day,
So did I set about me all a lie,
And woo my days, to dream them overgood :
Yet ever at this feast of Setian wine,
Beneath the board, my feet would tread the ground
To find it quake as on Campanian soil,
While all my soul would haste away to weep—
That last the butterfly, the troubadour,
The heartener of young feasts, was sudden dead,
Since hunters had long seen their plumed prey,
And in much patience last found their reward.
Yet in extremity great wisdom came,
As on Laertes' son in his great needs :
And I did yield, and husband strength gainst strength,
Not only for the light, but for my love.

And long and patient as the rodent works
Amid the grain of headstrong husbandmen,
I worked, who worked for others than myself,
Till I had won, and love was helped.
But then, O Laolus, thou balm of grief,
My pinnacle again was undermined,
And I was cast, all pitiable, to earth,
Bound to the oaks of gloom's abysmal shade.
So I proud fool, who'd armed to succour love,
Again must list her mournful carolling.
O Laolus, O Laolus, my heart
Now like a stemmed torrent twisted is ;
Ah, succour me from paths where madness treads ;
In all the courts of life is suffering,
In all the nights to owls its voice be hinged."

"O Dante, friend, he heard that plaint where love
Sinks low in sanguined dooms of grief,
Because of helplessness to sterner arms.
And I was answered as shall follow here,
The sweet Aiolic tongue proclaiming soft
The reed of Laolus in beauteous guise."

Laolus.

"O Stranger from the Wood of Broken Youth,
Full many rocks and promontories grim
I know fill life that Time allots to man :
And as the load of care is great, or song
More tragic than Euripides may speak ;
Or as the way is smoothed to silver light
In scintillant glow of unimpeded powers,
So shall his greater spirit rise, or fall,
Yet rising, falling, continue to its goal,
Where I do rule to heal his bitterness—
Or if Perfection cloaks, to humanise."

So did he speak, then beckoned to his side,
While I was lost with marvelling at youth
That spake with wisdom of Osirian seers,
And glowed triumphant there in radiance pure
As milk and honey of the Dorian brow.
Then, neath the stars that gemmed the eastern sky,
To gleam like tears that glow in Eastern shrines
Speaking the worth of their last sad decline,
His arm did sweep abroad below the night
To bid my eyes recover of their hurt,
And look, and learn, and hear, if I would live
To heal me of my wounds and soften pain.

The sounding utterance of Nature's art
Next he did set his lips to bend the world
And bring my mind more swift within his will,
To brim the waters of his fairest strength.
And then, his music stayed, and night was held,
And but for splendour of the moon's bent bow
I had not read so plain his lesson-book,
As stretching far below I saw the gleam
Of quickened waters mazing to the sea,
Against whose banks a slender city stood,
Where many a lance and pennon glittered fair
Of cataphracts whose pride to tourney rode.
Then Time was not, and sudden morning leapt
Hot limbed and puissant, warming all the dawn
And all the Gothic triumph of that scene.

O friend, who conjured me to speak, and tell
All visions from the art of Laolus,
Hear now his final speech as he did show :

Laolus.

"Though thou art beggared and the world is hard
Is not your heritage this symbol here
Which holds the Gothic artificer lord ?
Go, take and mend thy broken youth,
For Laolus has love to succour thee.
He gives thee Greece, for thine the prize of Rome,
With Leonardo's, Memling's calmer shrine—
All the world's treasure to thy feet ;
And yet, dear Neophyte, you come in tears,
To learn my name, and plead my further care.
Though thou art beggared, and the world is hard
Have I been mean and balanced grief with dross ?

"What though they hurt thy pride and pour out scorn,
What though thy purple's trampled in the street,
What though a serf at beck of unformed minds,
Can they divest thee of thy soul's blue gems !
Why need you fear them in their pigmy might,
Their day shall be their day and not your year."

'You know of Life, its inner meaning learned !
The Blue Flowered Crown is very near thy brow,
So be not as a child with childish fears,
But gird thy spirit to the patience set
By Christ, and that Blue Flower of Northern paths,*
Whose spirit lives within my fairest work :
Him, and one other, at thy side,
Who is the Gothic rose of patient Love :
Who yet shall wing the fragrance from his height
To chasten all the heart of West and East,
And all the rarest gards of heavenly rule.
As for thy love, take heart for it was wrought
A cygnet on the storm-tide's swollen flood,
But yet in space of time shall ride a swan
For joy of knights who dwell in Avalon."

"And so farewell, each eve my pipes shall play,
Upon the winds that thread thy forest stems
And make such cunning that thy sore distress
Shall be forgot, and you shall deal with joy,
As one who heard the wind, that dancing sang
Among the rushes of Eurotas, since

*Novalis.

New beauty is now born into thy world
That takes its life from countries of the mind.
And so farewell, I leave you now to voyage
Untrammelled, as a venturer past the world
Of sense, to realms of drunkenness divine,
Where wander those to whom Ilissus spake,
And wandering two by two, as prophets will,
Watching the eyes of each for beauty spent
In richness of the transcendental mind.
Farewell, forget all fear in me, forget
No more in light and darkened hours that I
Am Gardener of the Sacred Flower, tending
It as tends the eremite his deathless
Flame."

I made obeisance then, the while
The day consorted far with happiness.
Therein did end, dear Singer of the South,
The reed of Laolus to quell despair.
And I am comforted, fearing no longer
Now the forest gloom of prescient owls,
Who'd mock and taunt, to bid my heart decline,
Since I may take new Love and Faith to bed,
Wooing a calmer sleep than I have known.

Humber Garrison, 1918

TOM OF OXFORD

TOLL Tom, toll !
Remorseless, ruthless, changeless,
Brazen articulation :
God's Recorder—
Seeing and hearing all.
To us—
Inscrutable, emotionless !
Is there no tenderness in you ;
No sweet-toned motherhood
As Magdalen whispers
To her poplar madonnas ?
There is no change in you ;
No message of relenting—
Not even to the hallowed places
Where the stars incline over Shotover hill.
You are inhuman !
Listen !
The sun gilded the streets of your city,
Raised the celandine-heads
Far over your pastures ;
The air was scented,
Sweet joy of spring
Was quick in intimate bosoms :
The air was quick with intimate song.
All was beauty !
Now go back in your mind,
Yes, toll giant of Osney, toll !
You will not hear me .
No softening to my plaint.

Don't you remember
Just such another day ?
The May was blooming ;
Emma Trelauney—
A young girl,
The gipsy spilth in her hair
Entered your gates :
Fresh wind-flowers were in her hand—
It was her marriage day.
A smile was upon her face :
Beauty dwelt therein,
Such dreams were in the eyes :
Such beauteous ecstasy—
Two on the road to Emmaeus
When a wondrous presence arose in the path,
Had such beauty.
Emma grown woman,
Long after gave me the picture
To the tune of her ringer—
The squelch of her dolly-tub :
Gave it me gladly
While I watched, the play of her arms
Rich as Bellini's Madonnas.
Then—
A long interval :
I return from a long Wandering,
I come back to the city—
Toll giant, toll, you shall soften yet !

Again she gilds her walls :
The yellow of oelandines
Is again in the meadows—
All is gay,
Yet with secret intimate communals.
Then—
There in the sun—
See !
Decrepit, shuffling ;
A figure :
Age—
Age, black in the sun,
Age grown hideous,
Lightning-struck :
Life twisted, racked,
Cowers, as if fearing a blow.
It blinks there in the sun ;
I give it my hand—
Pitifully I beseech recognition.
What an awakening !
Down what infinite maze of corridors
Has one atom of memory to thread haltingly.
Still the eyes of Age
Take none of my warmth.
At last,
A voice croaks :
"Why master, master, so its you !"
Then into the eyes, creeps,
Just a little—
Of Youth.
But a beard of white straggling hairs
Suoks at the chin :

The neck is gnarled—
There is filth :
Rags ill-conceal the body's twisting.
Toll Tom, toll !
I must go—
I would run if I dared.
A blackbird is singing :
"Listen Emma, there is Spring—
You will warm again !
No, no, you've a long time yet ;
Don't, don't be foolish ! "
I am gone—
At the corner I turn to look back.
Age clings by an age-crumbling wall,
Black in the sun.
Time, Time the reaper is abroad ;
His sickle is abroad to mock
See, the Maypole is hung with orêpe.
Toll inhuman bell,
Toll !

LUNGA'S SON

O MEN who stoop to the flower,
Who watch out the sunset
With calm in your eyes
And a strong smooth song
At your lips,
Listen now to a song of the past,
How a child of the sunset
Rode out in the dawn
From the palace of Lunga,
Aged Lunga the king.

At the foot of the dawn
Cold sank the night
When Lunga's son
So proudly went forth,
In his harness of silver
And harness of gold;
And the mist leant down
With a coat of lawn
For the youth who so proudly
Rode to the East.

And the whisper of birds
Fresh waked from sleep
Grew in his ears
With the softest
Most magical song
The moorlands had heard,
Until light grew today
And the cloak of the dawn
Was slipped from his mail
To the feet of his steed.

From his chamber of gold
The sun's pure eye
Flashed on the hero
Who rode in the dawn;
And he leant from his window
In mind for a gift
That should match
The splendour of mail
On the boy ;
And he flung out a mantle of gold
For him and his steed
As no mortal had seen.
Very high and proud
Grew the mein of the lad
As he wore the favours of Day.
If the maid of a king
Had passéd by
Her way were lost indeed.

But sick and so sad
Lay Lunga the king:
In a land of delight
He had mewed the boy ;
And now he had stol'n
Away from his side,
And gone was the ease
Of his years,
Four dark faced women
Tended his bed,
And often he asked
Had they heard of his son ;
And as often they answered,
The women of night :
"He rode at the dawn
He will not return !
He rode at the dawn
Past the witches burn,
Who has said he will not return."

So Life slipped low
At the old man's side :
With a cunning eye if the door
Were ajar
When the women of night
Passed out ;
For then 't would slip by
And never come back—
And Lunga's hand
Would grow limp on the soil.

And again asked the king
Had they heard of his son.
And the women of night
Answered—"Yes!
"In the light of the sun
He rides thro' the day
In a mantle of gold and pearl "

Then the king sighed soft
For never again he knew too well
In the light of day
Should he kiss the lad
Who'd stolen so quiet
Thro' the lids of night
To the East,
And the vision of Life

And they tended his side
Did the women in black,
And deemed it was over
With Lunga the king,
Whose hair was white, so white.
With a nod by one
From the chamber they stole.
Then seeing his turn
Life sped thro' the door:
And heavy lay Lunga,
Aged Lunga the king—
Sleeping no quiet sleep.

And four white swans
From the shadowed pool
Lifted their throats
To a stranger wind,
And gave a cry to the night :
The homage they paid
Was homage due
To one who was greater than king,
And whose pinions for ever
Old mother darkness
Governs her courage to hear.

A strange sad music wandered about
The palace of Lunga the brave,
While Eyton his son rode fast, so fast,
To life past the gates of ease,
With mantle of gold and of pearl.

O men who stoop to the flower,
Who watch out the sunset
With calm in your eyes
And a strong smooth song
At your lips,
This then the song
As I heard it sung
To the skirl of a pipe
On the moorlands of dream
One night.

THE GARDEN

BLESSED with the green of rains, charged sweet
with scent of May,

The garden paths caressed her as she walked with
slow foot-fall ;

Slight was her frame, but took no pressure of decay,
And age had found age beautiful as when youth
gave youth all.

Far over dreamy meadows bells toll the dying sun,
And a quiet is on her spirit for the tender drooping
balm

Of the evening filled with perfume the spring has
swiftly won,
And the rising moon that greets her in the garden
of her calm.

The ebony stick has brought her to the phlox and
marigold,

And a dream of one is with her who loved this
place the best of all,

Who was straight and clean of stature as Bayard was
of old—

Who when the drummers beat the fields, obeyed
the drummer's call.

His letters breathed a brighter hope than any she had
heard,

Nor any hint he gave to her that for his fairest youth,
Death leapt and chattered daily, and daily was deterred
From staying all the transient mirth that chased
across his mouth.

The mother thrilled with sense of beauty infinite :
For here it was the lithe strong arms had pressed
her to his breast,
While his proud mouth had sealed on hers the proudest
right`
That lowly tenderness may plan in gardens of
the West.
And so the moon grew white to silver all the lawns,
While the garden wicket grows more white, because
a shadow near
Has come to steal the wakened joy of any further
dawns.
The hand upon the wicket trembles, and the vision
is not clear

Of the one being in the garden who stands so quiet
and still.
At last the shadow enters and knows a form has
sudden fled,
And now is lonely weeping upon a haunted hill—
For with it comes a company of France's hidden
dead.
Then at the sound of feet she turns, while her heart
has made such stir,
To make her grip her stick more close, and head
grow more erect:
She sees a priest's worn cassock, and priests are sore
to her,
For as a child she knew they moved where life's
best ships are wrecked.

"Madame, your boy is dead," said he, with patient
glance:

"But he bade them say the lilies yet live strong
within the gale.

He died a hero's death, for honour, and for France!"

Then the mother faced and fixed his eyes, though
her cheeks were drawn and pale.

"I thank you for these words, for I see God spared
him speech

Before he died, and there are mothers for whom
no words atone

For speech of those they love, and whom no tidings
reach.

I thank you, and now leave me, for I would be
alone."

And there she sits so quiet, in the light of the young
moon,

While the flowers are dead, and the fruits are
dead, along with the young life

That someone sped to the depth of our last dim lagoon,

While only the priest in the fields of youth hears
the requiem guns of strife;

And he knows that strife goes on, and on, for ever, on,
and on;

And the harps of the world shall play on more, nor
any more shall bring,

The maids and youths to laughter, until that the end
be won,

And the eyes of men grow young again, and the
heart of the world can sing.

TO LT. COL. E. H. W. LASCELLES, C B E.

THE YOUTH OF ALL INDIA.

*We cannot say that we should have infinite freedom
to fetter ourselves, for the fettering ends the freedom.*

TAGORE.

THE YOUTH OF ALL INDIA

A Bravura Peice.

Scene.

Bombay, looking east. Neighbourhood of the Hanging Gardens. The city lies spread below. Time: sunset in December.

Enter a modern poet. He is dressed in a suit of tussore silks of the latest cut. Two dainty leaves of the poinsettia are at his button-hole.

Poet.

WAR again ; ever eternal War !
The world sickened with it, and yet she ories
To God as one o'er-tired and petulant
Because of surfeit. Like a child
She cries for more, insists again
That to the altars of that shibboleth
Of over patriot nations—Liberty—
The press of sacrificial victims shall return.
What eyes you spirits of old Ind, what eyes
Are there in all Bombay to read this night's
Most opiate and mysterious wizardry ?
Even now the splendid harbour isles

And palms are silhouette against the bronze
Of night's most ancient worth and lethal calm ;
From countless Hindu supper-fires arise,
Compounded strange and curiously, the scents
Of herbs beloved by the wives of Hindustan.
Hear you above the cricket's shrilly pipe
The tooting auto-horn of that great lord
The modern Zoroastrian and his kin:
The Arabian pearl-merchant from his home
Upon Cumballa and towered Malabar ?
Beauty bold, voluptuously free,
Escapes the pale zenanas of the East
And droops her sari neath the Indian moon.
And yet what eyes ye spirits of old Ind
In all Bombay are there to read the night,
Being busied with some Christ of newer right ?

As if in response to this invitation for enlightenment a tremor moves the palms and quickens to a rushing wind. The poet clutches his velour to save its flight into the dim confused regions below, where begin to twinkle the electric arcs of a beneficent municipality in strings of glowing gems. Out of the calm that follows arise the voices of spirits near him.

1st. Rishi.

Do no lips of young and bronzed lords
Breathe of the beauty that is found at last
In understanding of diviner mysteries
When two together drink of life as one ?

2nd Rishi.

Do none see to the stars beyond the palms,
And how they bend their ancient colours down,
Revolving glittering perquisites of faiths
And joys undreamed by Akbar's minstrels twelve ?

1st. Rishi.

Do none learn within their curious schools
What *secrets of the self* may be revealed
Unto the young and graceful bronzed lords,
Whose profiles, like old ivories, are proud
In delicate chiselled curves and lofty brows ?

2nd. Rishi.

Do they not teach our young and splendid men
What they may take for furnishing the soul
To match the outer garnishing of God ?

1st. Rishi

Alas, the knowledge of the perfect isles is not
As yet within the city's sanctuaries,
Nor given to the young men's minds ;
Yet for the loss Bombay shall answer soon
To her presiding deities.

Poet.

It seems,
O wandering spirits of the night, that you
Decide with me, attention here to all
Is found, save to the individual sense,
Which is perhaps esteemed somewhat remote—
Particularly curious and wild,
Or fraught with tiresome inconvenience.
But further, my discovery is this :
Seers reason with Young India's dismay,
And having made an end they leave it nought
To help itself escape the pleasure-wheel
Of cheap disordered sensibilities
That wake in cinema and music-hall,
Or charmed recesses of the patriot's jail.

Rishis.

We know, we know, O excellent young man,
There be no eyes in all Bombay, or ears
To win unutterable beauties here
Within the night that our Creator moulds
For ecstasy of Gods and favoured men !

Poet, wearily.

You, and I, good spirits, sleep too long,
For while we slept the Sahibs have tumbled in,
And give out Burke and Morley to the crowd,
Who lap it quicker than the cheerful pap
That feeds young India with the thrilled delights
Of martyr crowns and holy ecstasy.
We should not blame, good spirits, who have slept—
If seers are fools, how can the young be wise
Who are not taught by man's quaint works
To recognise potential lunacies,
Or values that can put the schools to shame ?
You know the state of things as well as I,
When Kalidasa shares the tomb with Anne,
When Indian drama's fallen down the drain,
With none to take a leaf from Berlin, or from Prague ! .

Rishis.

Young man, far worse than this there is to tell !
The other day we peeped into a house
And heard new *dharma sastras* for the young,
A newer code of torment than devised
By Sannyasis for their purity:
We saw how one did twist and turn a word,
And scoop it from the dry-boné skull, until—

Poet, hastily, and with perturbation.

Pray spare me, I know exactly how
They scooped—until Philology had cried,
“There is no Life,” who then was answered quick
By young Phonology, “Nor is there tongue !”
It’s all a game of jugglery you see,
Of pit and pat with dry sterilities
To organise a premature decay.
You know the way they hurl the books and texts
For annotators’ claws to fasten on,
Who sit in cobweb-homes, and waxen fat
With banyas of Calcutta and Madras—
The failed B. A. of legend, and of fact.

Rishis.

But is not this the boasted Western thought
That India hears so much from Oxford men ?
Once of course we gave our young men books
For their remembrance and their hearts’ delight,
Whose message had some lesson for their souls,
The tales of our old heroes, moving tales—

Poet, with exquisite urbane acerbity.

Excuse me, charming spirits, you are wise
I know, but wiser you will be to know
That Western thought set foot upon your shores
Within the fifties' or the sixties' whirligig ;
That now Sir Ashutosh Mukerjee
Treasures it along with his own works
Within a silver casket, and has placed
The whole within the academic vaults
Of India's foremost University.
The next consignment you will understand
Is not regarded with benevolence :
In fact good spirits—this you will accede—
The Western world stands fast, and must do still.
Texts, texts, not modern fustian,
For words especially, good spirits, know,
Are the sweetest fruit for U. P. and Bengal.
In pure effect just what they say is this :
Dig out the words, O patient-minded youths,
As Cockneys dig out winkles with a pin :
Pray what the devil have the stars to do
With those who spend long nights, and weary dawns,
Upon the noble dialect of Skeat
And Scott and shout, God save the King who sends
Us such curative vocables !
What have the stars to do, think you, with young
St. Xavier's gentlemen, who scan with pride
Tibullus and Propertius, and Gæpe
If one should mention Musset, or Verlaine,
Or whisper Swinburne loved, and Browning vamped,
And Vachel Lindsay laid the Holy Ghost.

Rishis.

Behold, young man, and stay your speech awhile !
Perhaps a remedy for all you say
Approaches now.

Enter a soothsayer, wearing a cap that is fashionable among a certain distinguished class who favour strongly the happy tenets of the New Messiah. He swings a censer to the accompaniment of a low chant.

Rishis.

See where he comes so pale—
The newer light of Asia, Poet, hear,
Don't irritate him, since his words must be
The latest phonograph of Eastern lore !

Poet, turning slowly and facing newcomer. Then inwardly feverish yet still with outward calm.

I'm smoother than the ocean's foam
Caressing the dim shores of Malabar !
Is it a funeral note that he declaims ?
One is prepared for much who once has heard
Grey's *Elegy* in Urdu and—

Soothsayer, with intense preoccupation.

The bitter groats of knowledge tear the soul :
The bitter fruits of self-delusion burn.
My Master never spares himself, but writes
Continually the word for all to know—
The *dharma sastras* of the Newer Life.
He fasts, he fasts continually, and dreams
How India is returning to the past;
Attentively and zealously recites
The *Mantrams* and divine *Gayatri*.
With upraised arms a thousand lilies high
Unto the sun are raised and *Sukta* sung :
A thousand hearths the hymn to Vishnu hear.
The wise young men he sees within the house,
Who study the *Puranas* and *Smritis*,
And *Vanaprastha's* mode of life perform.

Rishi's, with ecstasy.

Listen, listen poet, listen how
Melodiously it rolls from off his tongue :
As a smooth wind's breath upon the scarlet reeds,
Or shama's note in a garden of Jehan :
As bulbul's o'er fair Jhelum's rippled stream,
Or love notes of the queen of Udaipur,
Before she knew that trespass on her dreams.

Poet.

I hear, O spirits, I hear, I burn, and find
A feverish enthusiasm too divine.
But now methinks he takes us nearer home ;
I feel a slightly warmer air, is not
His speech now more distractingly advanced ?

Soothsayer, swaying censer with increased vigour.

The bitter groats of knowledge tear the soul !
Ten thousand jails take India's youth,
Because the hideous present is corrupt,
And Simla dines with Satan day by day,
And drinks black beer o' nights unblushingly.
Think, think, I pray, on India's wrongs,
And pray diviner guidance for her need.
The pride of Islam lies a-bleeding now,
As when Bagdad the law of Chengis knew ;
O, shall our youth sit still on college bench
When Simla knows the puff of Satan's pride
And listens to her women-folk's disdain
Who dance five nights in seven for their shame ?

Rishis, in chorus.

Shame !

Soothsayer.

Think, think, and pray for India's wrongs !
Wake, O wake, before it is too late,
And our dear Alma Mater trodden low :
War, and sacrifice, and spinning-wheels—
These we demand of our warm-pulsing youth !

Poet, absently,

Ah yes, I thought I'd know of war tonight,
And that some pestilential vapour rose
That would confound the issues of the moon !

Rishis.

Hush, hush, there is yet more of this !
These are the *dharma sastras* of new remedy.

Soothsayer.

Wake, ah wake, before it is too late;
Wake young men of India, sink your sloth;
Your Alma Mater lies a shattered wreck !
O Aligarh, Benares, and the twelve-score,*
Give ear and hear the messages of love
From India's ten thousand thousand jails,
Where in the cool recess of prison we
Find many a dim convenient subtlety.
Back to the past we have determined on !
Back to the past on wings of tender doves
And reticent obedience ! for such
Shall lift Young India from the doom of shame
And fructifying sin. Think, think,
Of the Motherland which brought you up, and ask
If you owe anything, how shall you pay !
Be grim, be grim, and very stern today,
And dream of the ineffable delight
Of martyrs' crowns. Let never laughter wake,
Lest from your present purpose you may turn,
And economic values be destroyed,
But grow your beards and shave your crowns, and see
That never humour's sense immoderates
Your destinies and well appointed tasks.

*This no doubt has reference to the existing Indian fashion of creating indescribable and innumerable Universities.

Poet, rather alarmed.

Good friend, you will destroy your censer there
If you must swing it to such animated
Speech : and yet I do confess you know,
You titillate me mightily with all
This talk of yours, this earnest puissant mood
Of utter strong forgetting ; yet now,
Since you compute a list, pray let me add
A little unto it—as *sometimes* I've ideas.
These too I would suggest that you forget !
Forget that there is such a thing as food
That can be taken beautifully with speech
Which measures wit 'gainst wit, and seeks to lift
The magic of a night to crystal spheres.
Suppose that we were dining out at Green's !*
Forget how piquant we should look indeed
If my appreciative sense could help
To lift the quintessential Gandhiite
Of you, to the quintessential Ibsenite
Of me across the table with the port ;
And then forget how very absolute
A joke in pure bizarre it were, to think
That Mrs. Naidu lunched with Edmund Gosse,
Or tantalized the poet laureate
By burning crème-de-menthe beneath his nose :
That Arthur Symons was—just—Arthur dear,
Within this lady's winnowed hemisphere :

*Bombay's premier restaurant, with a fine view of the harbour, which nature obviously designed for poets and politicians to enjoy along with the Horatian couplets of Sir Alec. Muddiman.

And William Butler Yeats, was Willie too !
Forget that Oxford is, or Cambridge was ;
Forget that there is such a thing as life
Worth living in our scheme of earthly things.

Soothsayer, growing less animated with his censer.

What voice is this I hear, that speaks as though
The splendour of our creed were soaked in him ?

Poet

The jails are full, and yet not full enough,
And though they've had a riot in Bombay,
And many told they were not wanted there,
Yet foolishly enough it seems they still
Will flock to see Charles Chaplin in 'The Kid'.
But now there is no manner of doubt at all,
The cure for all these miseries and shame
Is surely —

The poet gazes more fixedly at the soothsayer.

— in the mild circumference
Of the most famous symbol that you wear
Becomingly, and with so fit a sense,
Being more aesthetic than the French,
Whose cap of liberty is seldom worn
For fear that Mr. Lloyd George's scorn
Shall wither in a too intensive scheme
For their damnation and humility.
The cure is obvious—

Here the soothsayer surprises the poet by precipitately throwing away his censer and embracing him with ardour.

Soothsayer.

Another, yet another to the fold !
The khaddar-sense is now for you to gain :
To fling your silks away and watch them burn.
The moon, and stars, and India's purple night
Of wizardry you must forswear, and lift,
With holy calm, your arms, no longer bold,
Aloft, invoking beatific joy.
Our prayers are heard, shine out ye lamps of love :
This is the hour, O God, this is the hour !

Rishis, whispering together.

More like perhaps the hour of fatuous sense !
The night grows sudden curious and much upset,
To breed a tedious bewilderment.
What shall we do ?—Our colleague seems astray !

Exit Soothsayer, divine love radiating his countenance.

Poet.

My dear most excellent spirits, be not rash
In circumambient judgment of myself,
Or think my foolishness is measured by
The gross, or quite within such khaddar-sense
As injures the economy of life.

Think you, that yonder fellow, just now gone
Had stayed his programme of forgetting much
Without some keenly sympathetic aid,
Or due acknowledgment of remedies
So ably demonstrated for our weal?

Besides, admit, good spirits, that you have
A kind of sneak regard for the fellow's creed,
That leads your pulses to a queer tattoo
Of neither for, nor gainst, but—medially—
That truly queer damnation for the soul,
If-you but ask the 'Right' or 'Left' who sit
Upon interminable debate about
The salt that we consume so lavishly,
When Simla is *en fête* for half the year.

Rishis, sighing regretfully.

The spirit of Sannyasa is on all,
And from Lahore to Bangalore they find
The vast dimensioned tree of liberty
Burdened with a pure ecstatic fruit.
The sacrificial victims load their hearts
With the deep communal virtues of the fruit,
And if they're young and charming, then the gods
Are glad in a more tremendous liberty.

Poet, sadly.

I am afraid good spirits that you're right ;
The opiate does its duty admirably,
And even you my friends can scarcely say
When they shall waken from this trance of love.
And therefore you and I are lonely here
Above the harbour of the Bombay isles,
And none of India's youth is here to read
The secrets of the night's sweet loveliness.
The young men busy with their martyr's smile,
Or take no heed at all of anything
Than boast perhaps of old Tod's Rajustan
And all its battered caravanserai,
Or how that Hind is Jagadguru* still
To all that Puck's swift girdle could embrace.
I had come here in innocence of love,
To tell abroad some fairer things for life
Than hastening on, with passionate garlanding,
To cages whose iron bars but bruise the mind.
Good spirits, all is twisted out of gear,
And no proportion gaining eloquence !
Where are the youthful hearts to take a step
With mine for intellectual beauty's sake ?
Here is a tragedy of awful waste,
A tragedy of contacts gone astray
In clash of passionate mistaken faiths
And glut of national hysteria !

*Here he lifts his arms to the Rishis in a gesture
of despair, facing once again the sea.*

* Spiritual Teacher.

Rishis.

The spirit of Sannyasa is on all !

Poet, leans wearily against baluster.

Aye, and yet it is not kind to taunt
One who has come with newer faiths and newer
Loves beyond imagining of gods.
Take on the count good Rishis now,
And spin for me again a better doom !

Rishis, unfalteringly.

The spirit of Sannyasa is on all !

Poet, distantly.

No eyes, no eyes to win the sum at all
Of this most magic hour, when palms can bend
Their tall and crested pride to the audience-floor
Of the queen moon, seeing amid the trace
Of beauties intricate new marvels born
Of life and death, of love, and newer faiths :
No ears to listen to the voices low,
Of magical deliveries of song
Made perfect with Ajunta's pictured caves.
Nor voice beside mine own talk to me
Of intimate, passionate, dearly human things !

Rishis, far away.

The spirit of Sannyasa glows abroad
Upon the faces of our young and bronzed lords !

Poet, very softly.

No voice, no voice at all to speak to me
Of intimate, passionate, dearly human things !
O India, with face so very fair
As of some page of a Ferrara queen,
Thy soul is fled away and sleeps who knows
In deepest depth of Himalayan snows,
And God alone may tell what kiss shall live
To chase afar this dead serenity !

~~XXXXXX~~

*From the city of half forgotten faiths and new begin-
nings winking below is wafted up the chant of those
who journey with a silent comrade to the Ghats :*

"Ram, Ram, Sita Ram."

GIRGAUM,
Bombay, Xmas, 1921.

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